



## Pupil Attendance Policy

### Purpose

Dean Valley Community Primary School recognises the importance of good attendance and the impact of attendance on achievement and attainment. We aim to achieve good attendance by operating an attendance policy within which children, staff, parents, governors, the local community and the Education Welfare Service can work in partnership. The school will monitor attendance and ensure quick and early intervention if a problem is identified.

All staff will expect and encourage good attendance. Good attendance is seen as an achievement in its own right and recognised as such by the school. The attendance policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all.

### Aims

- To improve the quality of school life
- To ensure a culture in which good attendance and taking holidays in designated school holiday time is recognised as the only acceptable standard
- To demonstrate to children, parents and staff that the school values good attendance and to recognise that good regular attendance is an achievement in itself
- To be consistent in implementation, both in terms of rewards and sanctions
- To value the individual and be socially and educationally inclusive

### Objectives

- To involve children more in recognising the importance in their attendance
- To improve communication with parents about regular school attendance
- To ensure parents appreciate good attendance is an integral part of the home/school agreements
- To ensure that parents understand that they should not take holidays in term time except in exceptional circumstances
- All school staff to continue to take responsibility with children and parents for children's attendance
- To recognise the important role of the admin team in promoting and monitoring good attendance
- Effective working relationship with Education Welfare Service, and the reporting of concerns to the service
- To ensure all partners are aware of their roles and responsibilities in monitoring and responding to attendance
- To ensure that partners are aware that the school is legally obliged to submit absences to the DfE.



## Targets

- To have an effective means of collecting and monitoring attendance and punctuality information
- To discuss the settings of targets for the school with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and the School Improvement Partner as appropriate
- To ensure that such data is available and used effectively by the Headteacher and staff in conjunction with the EWO
- To agree specific targets for individuals, families and where and whenever necessary, and target school attendance to improve.
- To reward children for good attendance
- To target resources and implement where most appropriate
- To keep parents, children and governors informed of policy, practice and targets at least annually when the new policy is issued
- To ensure that the school is aware of government targets which may have been set for some vulnerable groups, such as 'Cared For Children'

## Informing Stakeholders

### Parents/Carers will be advised of our policy on attendance:

- When their children first start school
- Home school agreements
- Through newsletters and the school website
- At parent\carers evenings
- In the school prospectus.

### The children:

- In assemblies
- In the classroom
- During appropriate areas of the curriculum.

## Procedures

In order to maintain good attendance at Dean Valley Community Primary School and to promote learning, the Headteacher and Admin team lead and manage the following procedures:

- Children are expected to attend all sessions in the academic year (190 days) unless there is an exceptional circumstance justifying the reason for absence. Parents and carers are expected to provide an explanation if their son or daughter is absent on the first day the absence occurs (preferably before 9.30am for safeguarding and health and safety reasons). This can be by letter, email, telephone, Parentmail app or personally at the office.
- The Admin Assistant, within the admin team, will contact parents by telephone on the morning of the first day of absence if parents have failed to inform the school of the absence. This is followed by further



calls, emails and/or a letter after two days of unexplained absence. If no explanation is given within two weeks then the absence will be classed as unauthorised.

- Class teachers take a register twice a day. In addition, the class teacher alerts the Admin Assistant regarding children causing concern re: attendance.
- Children's attendance is recorded using the symbols advised by the DfE and Cheshire East Council.
- All children's attendance is monitored by the Administration staff, Headteacher and Class teacher.
- We monitor identified groups of children, for example, 'persistent absentees', children/families who are persistently late and will take appropriate remedial action where necessary
- The Administration staff meet the Educational Welfare Officer regularly to review whole school attendance, individual's attendance, and specified groups' attendance.
- The Administration staff and Headteacher can meet the Educational Welfare Officer to monitor attendance of individual children causing concern regarding attendance. Intervention strategies and their impact on attendance are implemented, monitored and reviewed for children whose attendance falls below set levels. See procedures later in this policy.
- If a child truants or is persistently late in the morning the parent/carer will be contacted as soon as possible.
- The Administration staff issue a termly report for teachers and parents which is shared at Parents Evenings.
- Classes with the best attendance each week will be recognised and rewarded in the school's weekly Celebration assembly and reported to parents via the school newsletter.

## **Absence**

There are two types of absence:

1. Authorised (when the school approves child absence).
2. Unauthorised (where the school will not approve absence).

In accordance with DfE and Cheshire East Council guidelines authorised and unauthorised absences are identified and coded (see appendices).

All requests for leave of absence are made to the Headteacher in writing prior to (at least a month) the leave of absence taking place unless in exceptional circumstances (eg flight delays). It is school policy not to approve requests for absence except in exceptional circumstances. This policy is included and highlighted in the school prospectus. Guidelines from the DfE and Cheshire East Council have been used to draw up this policy.



### Unexplained Absence

- First day call to absent child’s home. Record call and information given.
- Provide teacher and/or Headteacher with weekly report of unexplained absences.
- If calls are unreturned and no explanation is given for absence school will contact the Education Welfare Officer for advice
- If no reason provided on child’s return send letter home and contact the Educational Welfare Officer for further advice if no explanation is given following receipt of the letter.

<b>Percentage since the start of the school year</b>	<b>Intervention based / total attendance since start of the year. At the end of each term the following procedures will be followed....</b>
90%-94.9%	Teacher and admin team highlight drop in attendance to Headteacher and consideration given to writing to parents depending on reason for absence
80%-89.9%	Letter sent alerting parents of concern * and the Educational Welfare Officer will be contacted by school with concern.
<80%	Meeting with parent (and child if appropriate) on a regular basis. Setting of long term and short term targets and production of individual action plan. EWO intervention as appropriate.

\*School should be aware of the reasons for high levels of absence and be sensitive towards the causes before issuing the sample letter

Any absence below 90% will be classed as persistently absent and the Educational Welfare Officer will be informed.

### Lateness

- School opens the doors for entry at 8.50am. Registration is completed by 8.55am so the first lesson can start at 8.55am. All children are expected to be in school for registration by 8.55am. If a child arrives at school after 8.55am then they must enter the school via the front door.
- The register will remain open for a further 35 minutes and finally close at 9.30am. If a child arrives before 9.30am then the child’s record will be recorded as late (using the symbol L). If a child arrives after 9.30am then the child’s absence will be recorded as late after the register (using the code ‘U’). This sort of absence is unauthorised and will show on the child’s record as unauthorised absence.
- Children who are consistently late (whether before or after 9.30am) are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others.



- Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern further action will be taken in line with action outlined to deal with absence.

Percentage	<b><i>Intervention based on the percentage of lateness since the start of the year. At the end of each term the following procedures will be followed...</i></b>
90%-94.9%	Teacher or admin team highlight increased lateness to Headteacher and consideration given to writing to parents depending on reason for lateness
80%-89.9%	Late letter sent alerting parents of concern
<80%	Meeting with parent (and child if appropriate) on a regular basis. Setting of long term and short term targets and production of individual action plan. EWO intervention as appropriate if lateness is as Late (after register is closed) and categorised on the register a 'U'

NB: a child's registration mark will be marked with an 'L' (Late before register closed) if they arrive within 35 minutes of the end of registration (i.e. before 9.30am).

NB: a child's registration mark will be marked with a 'U' (Late after register closed) if they arrive after 9.30am with an inadequate reason (e.g. slept in) – this is unauthorised absence and will remain on the child's record.

### **Planned Absence during term time**

#### **Can I take my child on holiday during term time?**

- Amendments to the 2006 Regulations remove references to family holidays and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days.
- The amendments make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- The amendments give parents no entitlement to take their child out of school for a holiday during term time.
- The DfE is anticipating that not many absences for leave in term time are authorised by schools.

The current law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must be in exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

Except in absolutely exceptional circumstance holidays in term time will be unauthorised.

Parents can be fined for taking their child out of school during term time without consent from school.



### **Procedure for requesting term time absence**

- Parents must complete a leave of absence form. This can be collected from the school office. The completed form must be sent to the Headteacher one month in advance of the absence. If the absence is to be authorised then the Headteacher will sign the return slip at the base of the leave of absence form and this will be returned to the parent/carer. Sometimes a letter will be sent with the form depending on the reason for the absence.
- An appointment to see the Headteacher may be required.

The law states that the Headteacher can only grant leave in exceptional circumstances. It is impossible to determine in advance all such exceptional circumstances and therefore the question of what circumstances are exceptional are left to the Headteacher's judgement.

A major determining factor will be whether the proposed absence could have been avoided with some planning or forethought.

If no reason is provided within two weeks (10 school days) of the absence then the absence will automatically be recorded as unauthorised.

Where leave of absence is granted, the child's absence will be recorded as **authorised**.

Where leave of absence is not granted the child's absence will be recorded as **unauthorised**. The Headteacher will write to the parents informing them of the decision including making it clear that consideration will be given to whether a Penalty Notice (PN) should be issued. A PN will usually be issued when the unauthorised absence is great than 5 days (10 sessions) or more than 5 days (10 sessions) during two consecutive half terms even within two different school years i.e. absence in summer 2 half-term and the autumn 1 half-term.

**Appeal against a judgement** - Where the Headteacher declines to authorise a leave of absence the parent/carer may appeal to the Chair of the Governing Body. Such an appeal must be made in writing and must set out the reasons that the leave of absence is sought and why these circumstances are exceptional.

Upon receipt of a written appeal, the Chair will form a panel to consider the appeal. This panel will be made up of the Chair and any two other Governors appointed by the Chair. The panel will consider the appeal and determine the outcome promptly, but in any event within 7 days from its receipt by the Chair.



The panel will either uphold the Headteacher’s decision or direct the Headteacher to grant a leave of absence and change the absence mark from unauthorised to authorised.

### Penalty Notices

Penalty Notices are fines that can be imposed on parents. They are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided. They can only be issued by the Local Authority at the request of the Headteacher or someone authorised by them (a deputy or assistant head authorised by the Headteacher), a local authority officer or the police. Penalty notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence.

Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate in the following circumstances:

- At least ten sessions (five school days) lost due to unauthorised absence (O code) in any two consecutive half terms.
- Unauthorised leave of absence (G code) of at least ten sessions (five school days) due to holidays in term time.
- Persistent (at least 10 instances) late arrival at school, for example after the register has closed, in any two consecutive half terms.

Penalties can be issued where the pupil’s absence has not been authorised by the school. Penalties may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. The parents must have been notified by the school at the time of the exclusion of this and the days to which it applies.

<b>Penalties for unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>Timeline</b>	<b>One child</b>	<b>Two children</b>
Paid within 21 days	£60 per parent	£60 per child = £120 per parent
After 21 days and before 28 days	£120 per parent	£120 per child = £240 per parent
After 28 days	The parents will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates’ Court on the grounds that the parents have failed to secure their child’s regular attendance	The parents will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates’ Court on the grounds that the parents have failed to secure their children’s regular attendance

Penalty notices will be administered and managed by Cheshire East Council and the monies retained by them.



Dean Valley Community Primary School



### **Governing Body**

The Governing Board will monitor attendance termly and will review this policy annually. They will also communicate to parents and staff annually with regard to attendance.

**Authorised by Governing Body Spring 2019**

**Date for review Spring 2022**



## Appendix 1

### Roles and Responsibilities

#### Local Authority (Cheshire East)

- The Local Authority has a duty to ensure that a child is receiving a suitable education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- The Education Welfare Service (EWS) is often responsible for carrying out the Local Authority's duties.
- Education Welfare Officers (EWO) should build effective working relationships with schools, parents and other services to resolve attendance problems.

#### The Headteacher

- The Headteacher is responsible for making sure that two registers are kept; the Admission Register and the Attendance Register.
- The Headteacher is responsible for the operational management of the attendance policy.
- Building effective working relationships with schools, parents and other services to resolve attendance problems
- Setting and regular review of targets for the whole school, year/class groups and individual children
- Maintain high profile of attendance in assemblies and meetings with teachers.
- Refer children to the EWO
- Discuss actions / set targets for those children with poor attendance.
- Manage the reward programme.

#### Class Teachers

- Prompt and accurate marking of registers
- Remind children to bring notes and pass these to the admin assistant
- Alert administration staff and/or headteacher of patterns / concerns
- Remind children and parents of the link between attendance and attainment
- Promote good attendance and punctuality

#### Administration staff at Dean Valley Community Primary School

##### Purpose of post in relation to attendance

- To maintain accurate records of attendance and follow up any unauthorised absences
- Remind children to bring notes and update register on receipt
- Track attendance and punctuality of children.
- Liaise with teachers in the tracking of absence or lateness



## Dean Valley Community Primary School



### **To whom responsible**

Headteacher

### **Principal Duties**

- To monitor registers of child attendance, ensuring that they are completed fully and accurately
- To provide regular statistical data and reports to the class teachers, the Headteacher and the Education Welfare Service as appropriate
- To follow up first day of absence and unauthorised absence by phone calls to parents/carers
- To liaise as appropriate with all staff
- To produce and dispatch letters to parents/carers regarding unauthorised absence
- To undertake other administrative duties as appropriate



# Dean Valley Community Primary School



## Appendix 1



### Dean Valley Community Primary School

#### Absence request form

Dear Mrs McPherson

I would like to request that \_\_\_\_\_

in Year \_\_\_\_\_ is given permission to be absent from school from

\_\_\_\_\_ until \_\_\_\_\_

therefore they will be absent for a total of \_\_\_\_\_ school days.

The reason for this request is:

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I understand that requests can only be granted in exceptional circumstances due to the changes in the law from September 2013.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to child

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## Dean Valley Community Primary School



### Appendix 2

#### Sample letter for children with less than 90% attendance

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

We are very keen to ensure that all children attend school regularly so that they can, over their time at Dean Valley, reach their full potential. As I am sure you are already aware, regular attendance is important not only for your child's academic progress but for their friendships too.

The school target for attendance is 97%. We have been reviewing the attendance of our children over time since the start of the academic year, September 2018, and I am writing to let you know that \_\_\_\_\_'s attendance was \_\_\_\_\_ to date. We understand that absences can happen for a number of reasons during the school year, including illness, but as their absence is below the school target we feel it is important to share it with you as this will impact their academic achievement.

If you are having difficulties in getting \_\_\_\_\_ to school, please do not hesitate to contact me as we are very happy to help.

Kind regards

Mrs V McPherson  
Headteacher.



## Dean Valley Community Primary School



### Appendix 3 Pupil lateness sample letter

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

We are very keen to ensure that all children attend school regularly and on time so that they can, over their time at Dean Valley, reach their full potential. As I am sure you are already aware, regular attendance is important not only for your child's academic progress but for their friendships too.

We have been reviewing the punctuality of our children over time since the start of the academic year, September 2018, and I am writing to let you know that \_\_\_\_\_ has been recorded late to school \_\_\_\_\_ times to date. Children should arrive at school for 8:50am, ready to go in for the register to be taken at 8:55am. Arrivals between 8:55am and 9:30am are recorded as L late, and those after 9:30am recorded as U (late after registers close).

We understand that this can be due to a number of reasons during the school year, but if there is anything we can do to support you in ensuring that \_\_\_\_\_ arrives to school on time, please do not hesitate to contact me as we are very happy to help.

Kind regards

Mrs V McPherson  
Headteacher.